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A

SERMON,

PREACHED SEPTEMBER 12, 1821,

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

REV. RICHARD MANNING HODGES,

TO THE

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PASTORAL OFFICE

IN THE SOUTH PARISH IN BRIDGEWATER.

BY CHARLES LOWELL,
MINISTER OF THE WEST CHURCH IN BOSTON.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARISH.

BOSTON:

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SERMON.

Acts xx. 20.

——I KEPT BACK NOTHING THAT WAS PROFITABLE UNTO YOU, BUT HAVE SHEWED YOU, AND HAVE TAUGHT YOU PUBLICLY, AND FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE.

IT was a faithful minister, an eminent apostle of Jesus Christ, who spake the words I have now read to you. They were addressed by him to the elders of Ephesus, in a solemn and affecting interview, when he was about to separate from them for the last time. In a brief review of his ministry among them, he calls them to witness that he had been faithful to his master, and to them; that he had not shunned to declare to them the whole counsel of God, in as far as it could be profitable to them, and that now, when they were to see his face no more, he could go up to Jerusalem without apprehension, and sustain, unmoved, the bonds and afflictions that awaited him, as he was *pure from the blood of all men.*

This eminent apostle has furnished an example which is worthy the imitation of every christian minister. Happy are they who have drawn from the same source a portion of the same spirit; happy they who can tread, though with halting, unequal steps, the path he has traced for them, and who never lose sight of him, though far behind him in the race of glory.

The recollections which this day excites, and the prospects which it opens, forcibly admonish ministers to be cautious how they teach, and hearers to *take heed how they hear.* The former, as they *are allowed to be put in trust with the gospel, are so to speak not as pleasing men, but* GOD *who trieth the hearts;* and the latter, as this gospel is delivered to them, also, are to *receive with meekness* and candour *the ingrafted word, that it may save their souls.* An awful retribution awaits the unfaithful teacher, and the careless, negligent, unprofitable hearer. They have a mutual interest in the fidelity of the one, and in the attention and improvement of the other. Miserable indeed must be that minister who, through fear, shuns to declare to his people the whole counsel of GOD, or keeps back any thing which he believes might be profitable to them; and miserable the condition of the people who have such a minister. In the view of the responsibility connected with the ministerial office, the unspeakably powerful motives to fidelity, I tremble when I hear ministers, of whatever persuasion, denounced as unfaithful, I tremble for those who utter the denunciation. What a fearful responsibility do they assume in thus sitting in judgment on their christian brethren!

Of what may be profitable to his people, a minister must himself eventually be the judge, and for the correctness of his decision, he is answerable, not to his brethren in the ministry, nor to the christian community, but to his Master in heaven. That he may rightly judge, he must make himself acquainted with the word of GOD, with the necessities

of those who are committed to his charge, with the state of society in which they mingle, the temptations to which they are exposed, the prevailing vices of the age in which they live, and he should honestly and strenuously oppose every thing that may defeat the end of his preaching, and endanger their salvation.

He has the principles and maxims of the world to contend with, he has self interest, and passion, and prejudice, and evil propensities to oppose, he has pride, and ambition, and covetousness, and irreligion, and licentiousness to assail, and he must do it at every risk. He must speak boldly and without reserve; he must *cry aloud and spare not*, as he would secure to himself the consciousness of fidelity, and approve himself to GOD, a faithful steward *who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

Yet he should speak the truth in love. He should never free himself from that restraint of decorum which is due to his station, and that respect which is due to his people. He should never employ the pulpit as an asylum, where, without danger of contradiction or control, he may pour forth his invectives; where that mild religion which ought to correct his temper and check his passion, is perverted to sanctify opprobrious, abusive language. Then, indeed, he exposes his character, and prostitutes his office. A minister may be warm and earnest, GOD forbid that he should not be so, on subjects the most momentous which can engage the attention of mortals, but it should be the warmth of an honest, enlightened, affectionate zeal; the earnestness of one

who deeply feels the truths he teaches, and is "anxious mainly that the flock he feeds should feel "them too."

The design of our Saviour's mission was to advance the moral improvement of mankind. He came, indeed, to reveal to us doctrines the most sublime, to inculcate precepts the most pure, to exhibit an example the most holy, to make propitiation for the sins of the world, and by his doctrines, his precepts, his example, his death and resurrection, to bring life and immortality to light, and place them within the reach of all believers. But the end of all was the moral perfection of those to whom he was sent, without which, his doctrines, and precepts, and example, and death and resurrection, can be of no avail to us. It was *to purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.* It was to promote holiness ; and as *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, so with it, no one can possibly fail of this blessedness.

To promote holiness is the end of the christian ministry, and should be the great object of the labours of the christian minister. He must not be censured, then, if holiness be the frequent, may I not say, the invariable theme of his preaching. He may please the imaginations of his hearers by flights of fancy ; he may exercise their minds, and discover his own ingenuity by theoretical speculations and abstruse disquisitions, but he best answers and fulfils the design of his ministry when he *beseeches them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to* GOD, when he presents to them the bright pattern of the Redeemer's life, and urges their imitation of it.

He is bound, indeed, to elucidate as far as he is able, and may deem useful, the doctrines of the gospel, but the gospel itself, as a comprehensive whole, is *a doctrine according to godliness*, and no elucidation need be attempted by which this is not promoted. We assemble, ordinarily, but one day in seven, in the house of GOD. We are then engaged but a few hours in its services, and it is worse than useless to employ any portion of that time on points of doubtful disputation, or in speculations on subjects which, after all our investigation, are far, far beyond our reach. *Canst thou by searching find out* GOD? *Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is higher than heaven, what canst thou know?*

Nay, I go further, if I may be allowed for a moment to digress, except to those who have abundance of leisure, or whose profession seems to require it, it is worse than useless at any time to engage in such discussions, and it is time mispent to read them. The Bible purports to be, and is as it purports to be, a revelation of the will of GOD concerning his creature man. It follows, as a necessary consequence, that *that* will is clearly and distinctly made known to us. It purports to be our guide, and our only sure guide, to life and immortality. It follows, as a necessary consequence, that its directions must be plain, intelligible and explicit. If this were not the case, what would become of those whose capacities are limited, whose means of improvement are few and contracted, and who have no access to an interpreter of scripture? Must they be bewildered for want of a better guide than

the word of God? Must they be lost for want of a chart which is sketched with brighter lines, and marked with clearer characters than that which God has given them? It cannot be. No clouds and darkness overhang the path to heaven. It is sketched as with a sunbeam; it is clear, and fair, and beautiful, as the milky way, which cannot be overlooked amidst the splendour of the starry firmament.

It is the glory of our religion that it is adapted as well to the *capacities*, as to the situation and wants of all. It was at the head of that beautiful climax, by which our Saviour communicated to the disciples of John the design and effect of his mission, that he placed this most interesting fact, *the poor have the gospel preached unto them.* "Go tell John what things ye have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, *and the poor have the gospel preached unto them.*"

Yes, the poor—the illiterate, they who can obtain no other book than the bible, and perhaps even for that must be indebted to christian charity, they who have no time to read any other book than the bible, still less books of theological controversy, these have the gospel preached unto them. That single volume, that "book of books," as its very name imports, with no better capacity than God has given them, and with no other guide than that Holy Spirit which indited what they read, is *able to make them wise unto salvation.*

Who has not witnessed its sanctifying, consoling, animating influence on those who never heard of the subjects of controversy which have so much

agitated the christian world, who believed only that their bible was the word of GOD, who found in that a Saviour, and like the treasurer of Ethiopia, however rugged the path, or inhospitable the desert through which they passed, went on their way rejoicing.

In the example of the apostle Paul, the christian minister has a pattern of *private* as well as public fidelity in the discharge of the duties of the ministerial office. "I kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and *from house to house.*" Let not *private* religious instruction, then, be condemned. Let not the minister of religion be censured as over zealous when he addresses his people in their own houses, as well as in the house of GOD, on those great and momentous truths which it is the end of his office to teach, and should be the chief object of his thoughts and prayers and labours to disseminate. Subjects of controversy, if they must ever be introduced, are much more proper for private than for public discussion. Personal advice, admonition, counsel and caution are fit subjects of private application and address, and of private application and address only. Doubts and difficulties which may have arisen in the minds of individuals, can in private be best met, resolved and overcome. Serious impressions may there be cherished, a balm applied to the wounded conscience, and consolation imparted to the sorrowing heart.

A minister is to *be instant in season and out of season.* He is to *watch for souls as one who must give an account*, and he betrays his trust, he is

unfaithful to his Master, and not to his Master only, but to the souls of those who are committed to his charge, if he does not seize every favourable opportunity for conveying that *knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation.*

Bear with us, then, if we are zealous. Bear with us! O pardon us, just and holy GOD! that we are so cold, and remiss, and unfaithful in thy service! Blessed Saviour! how didst thou watch and toil and suffer to promote thy Father's glory in the world, and the welfare of his fallen, apostate creatures! Holy prophets, evangelists, apostles, martyrs! how earnestly did ye labour for the cause of truth and righteousness, how patiently did ye bear reproach and ignominy, how did ye triumph amidst persecutions, and tortures and death! and shall they who are honoured to succeed you, though in a far humbler station, be backward in manifesting a zeal for the truth, or shall they shrink from the duties and labours and trials of their office? Shall they not *endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, looking to the Captain of their salvation, the Author and Finisher of their faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high?*

Whilst the ministers of religion should not be influenced by the dread of censure to keep back any thing which might be profitable to their people, neither should they be tempted by the hope of applause, to utter any thing which their judgment condemns and their heart disavows. If they are sincerely desirous of winning souls to Christ, they will not be satis-

fied with empty applause. They will require a more substantial reward, the reformation and improvement of those to whom they minister, and they will be more rejoiced to be the instruments of conveying one useful truth to the understanding, and fixing one serious impression on the heart, than to receive the incense of praise from any audience, however numerous or enlightened.

It is with such feelings, I am persuaded, my brother, that you enter on the work of the ministry. To be a useful minister is your highest ambition, and it is the worthiest end to which your efforts can be directed, the noblest object to which you can aspire. I have presented to you the example of the great apostle of the Gentiles. Be careful that like him you are able to say at the close of your ministry, *I kept back nothing that was profitable to you.* Do you ask me to direct you to the most useful topics? I answer, that this people have chosen *you* and not *me* for their religious instructer, and, if they are wise, they will not desire that you should *inquire the law at the mouth* of any human teacher. Preach the truth;—*the word of* God *is truth.* Make yourself acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, with your own heart, with the circumstances and wants of your people, and you will be at no loss to determine what are the most profitable topics for your public discourses. In your private visits, subjects of instruction will continually present themselves. To him who is watchful to improve every opportunity for conveying religious knowledge, the most common occurrences will furnish themes. He

will find "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and GOD in every thing."

I am aware of the difficulties you must encounter, and the opposition you may meet with in the holy work to which you devote yourself. But be not dismayed, my brother. *Remember the words of the Lord, how he said, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness.'* Be faithful to your own conscience and to GOD, and you have nothing to fear. If you can appeal to HIM *who looketh on the heart* for the rectitude of your intentions and the uprightness of your conduct, you need not be discouraged by any thing which *man can say or do unto you.* Your character may be aspersed, and your ministry despised, but you may *be of good cheer* whilst you can say with the apostle, GOD *is my witness whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.* The arrows of detraction will fall harmless and blunted from that breast which is defended by the panoply of a good conscience.

Cherish a love for your people. Indeed all your ministrations among them are offices which lead to tenderness and love. Share in their joys and their sorrows. Be their counsellor in perplexity, their comforter in affliction, at all times their affectionate, sympathizing friend. In their seasons of prosperity, when *the candle of the Lord shines upon their head*, and the voice of health and gladness is heard in their dwelling, it is for you to direct to a grateful sense, and to a suitable improvement of the divine goodness. In their seasons of adversity, when

the Lord maketh the heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth it, it is for you to improve the opportunity for sowing the seeds of piety, or watering those which are already germinating, and, without this attention, might languish and die. When the heart, convinced of the emptiness and insufficiency of earthly good, returns from its wanderings, like the dove of Noah, having found no resting place, it is for you to direct it for refuge to the only ark of safety.

The children of your flock will be the objects of your affectionate solicitude. You will take them by the hand and lead them in the path of knowledge and virtue. Your Saviour evinced peculiar regard for little children. *He took them in his arms and blessed them.* By your instructions, admonitions, and warnings, you, too, his minister, will bless them.

In your intercourse with your people, encourage a free and unreserved communication of their sentiments and feelings, when it will relieve their own minds, and afford you an opportunity of imparting instruction and consolation. *Condescend to men of low estate.* "Pride was not made for man." Least of all does it become a christian minister, who, in the discharge of the duties of his sacred calling, is to be *the servant of all.* Yes, condescend to men of low estate, but never, at any time, or in any place, lose sight of that dignity and propriety of conduct which become you as an ambassador of Jesus Christ. *Let no man despise thee.*

Whilst some of your brethren may be disposed to *enter into the labours of other men*, and to *take the care of all the churches*, be content to labour in

your own vineyard, to nurture the plants which the Lord of the vineyard has committed to your care, and believe not that you have lived in vain, if, but a small number, through your instrumentality, are made to *bring forth fruit to everlasting life.*

You are honoured to succeed able, pious, faithful ministers. One of them it was my privilege to know and to love. An inmate of his family, I can bear witness (how many hearts in this assembly can bear witness!) to his integrity, his purity, his simplicity, his love of peace, his affectionate zeal for the welfare of his people. Having caught his mantle, may a double portion of his spirit rest upon you!

Brethren of this Christian Society—Were I to follow the impulse of my feelings, I should dwell on the satisfaction I derive from being allowed to address you on this occasion. I should revert to the days which are long since past, when I received instruction from the same lips with yourselves, and mingled *my* prayers with *yours* at this altar. The scenes and the associations of our early days are peculiarly dear to us, and we dwell upon them with fond, though melancholy remembrance.

But such recollections become not the dignity of this occasion. I stand here, not as an individual to give vent to my private feelings, but as a minister of religion, to discourse of eternal things; as the organ of this council, to offer you their congratulations, as the friend of your pastor elect, to ask for him a place in your hearts, and an interest in your prayers.

The occasion does not forbid, however, that I should call up to your respectful recollection those excellent men of GOD, who have stood in this place, and broken to you and to your fathers, the bread of life. May we not believe that even now, the spirits of the departed are witnesses of this interesting solemnity, that, bending from their high abode, they are sharers in our joy!

This day, my brethren, is a witness to you of the faithfulness of GOD. Your prayers have been heard. We present you a new pastor. Receive and cherish him. *Esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake.* It is for *your* interest and happiness, as well as his, that you should respect and love your minister. Teach your children to respect and love him. Let not the imperfections you may discern in his public preaching, or the failings you may discover in his private conduct, be the subject of conversation in your families. If ministers are not faultless, it should be remembered that they are men. If they are immoral, they are unworthy the station they hold, and cannot too soon be discarded from their office, and from the hearts of their people.

Manifest your attachment to your minister by your regular attendance on public worship, both in his presence and in his absence, and by the devout observance of all the instituted means of religious improvement. Do not consider *him your enemy because he tells you the truth.* We do not find that the elders of Ephesus had less regard for the apostle Paul because he kept back nothing that was profitable to them. On the contrary, when he parted from them, *they hung upon his neck and wept, sorrowing most of all*

for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.

We commend to you this our brother as worthy, in our estimation, of your respect, your affection and confidence. By your diligent improvement of his instructions, your candid interpretation of his conduct, and your earnest prayers on his behalf, may you strengthen his hands and encourage his heart. Dwell in love and in peace among yourselves, and may *the* GOD *of love and of peace be with you!*

MY HEARERS. There are few occasions when it is proper for a christian minister to make himself, or his profession, the subject of discourse. He is set for the defence and promotion of the gospel, and the evidence of that gospel he should exhibit and elucidate, its doctrines he should teach and enforce, its precepts he should inculcate, its motives display, its threatenings denounce, its promises unfold. He is to preach not himself, but Christ Jesus; and Jesus Christ, in all his offices, should be the frequent theme of his preaching. But there may be occasions when it is not unappropriate, and may be useful, to direct the attention of his hearers to the office he holds, and he is warranted by the example of the author of our text, to ask from them, not a larger portion of their substance, but an interest in their prayers, that they would bear him, as he bears them, on the arms of intercession to the throne of the ETERNAL, that his christian graces may be increased by the influences of the Holy Spirit, *and the arms of his hands made strong through the power of the mighty GOD of Jacob.*

Such an occasion presents itself at this time, when another labourer is about to be introduced to the christian vineyard in this place. Entering on an office in the highest degree important and responsible, this our young brother is much in need of the prayers of christians for aid in a work for which he is of himself insufficient, nor have *they* less need to be remembered who have already *borne the heat and burden of the day.*

When we reflect on the nature and end of the christian ministry, that it has reference not to the temporal welfare of this perishable body, to the wealth, the enjoyments, and the honours of this world, but to the eternal welfare of the immortal soul, to the riches, the felicities and glories of heaven, what an interest and importance does it assume!

Could you feel, my hearers, the solemn responsibility which they must feel who have it in charge to deliver the messages of GOD; could you know the difficulties, the trials, the discouragements they meet with in the discharge of their appointed duty, you would not wonder that, with earnest expostulation and entreaty, we address you in the words of the apostle, *Brethren, pray for us.*

Pray for us, that in public and in private our *doctrine may drop as the rain, and our speech distil as the dew; that we may be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves; that we may be examples to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity; that we may take heed to ourselves as well as our doctrine, for in doing this, we shall both save ourselves, and them that hear us.*

Nor is it for us alone that we ask your prayers. Pray for *yourselves* also, that we may not labour among you in vain, nor spend our strength for nought. If ministers must give an account of how they teach, hearers must give an account of how they hear. Could you realize the awful result of our preaching to the careless, unprofitable hearer, you would feel that *this is not a vain thing, for it is your life.*

The season of our preaching, and of your hearing, is fast passing away. The voice which now sounds in your ears the glad tidings of the gospel, and the awful denunciations of a violated law, will soon be hushed in the silence of the grave, and the ears which now hear, will soon be closed till they hear the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. That voice will penetrate the silent chambers of death, and that trump will awake the sleeping tenants to an awful judgment. GOD grant, that when we shall join that great congregation which no man can number, we may be found to have been faithful, and having worshipped, once at least, in one temple on earth, may mingle our hearts and our voices in the service of a *temple not made with hands, which is eternal in the heavens!*

AMEN.

CHARGE

BY THE REV. DR. PRINCE,

OF SALEM.

THE christian institution is the most important and beneficial system that was ever given to men, to promote their improvement and happiness.—While the laws and regulations of civil society look only to the protection of life, liberty, and property, to the advancement of the temporal interest of mankind, the laws and rules of the spiritual kingdom of Christ look further; they are designed to promote their everlasting well being, to fit them for the enjoyment of a future state. While civil institutions encourage the increase of knowledge, and the practice of piety and virtue, to enable men to make the best use of the blessings of this life, the gospel institution makes *these* the foundation of their future happiness. While the former provides for time, the latter prepares them for eternity. The christian minister, therefore, is an important character, as he holds the high office of instructing men in the great truths of the gospel; the doctrines, the laws, and the precepts of the kingdom of Christ. It is an office of great utility, and of high responsibility; and he who undertakes it, should weigh well its duties, consider the circumstances attending it, his abilities to perform those duties, and the heart with which he engages in it.

You, sir, have offered yourself to this work, and we believe you have not done it, but upon serious thought and consideration; that you have examined your own heart, as to the motives which induced you to undertake it; and that although you think

yourself in some measure qualified for it, you do not rely upon your own wisdom and strength alone for the discharge of its duties; but on your great Master who has called you to this work, and who has promised his assistance, through the Holy Spirit, to all his faithful ministers. In this belief the venerable council now present, as servants of Christ, our common Lord, have ordained you, and separated you to the work of the gospel ministry, by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, according to apostolic example. In their name I am requested to charge you on the faithful performance of its duties. Let me call to your attention the advice and direction which the apostle Paul gave to his son Timothy, on this interesting and momentous subject, the qualifications and duties of a bishop in the church of Christ; that, so far as these qualifications depend on your own exertion and study, you may make further improvement in them; and that you may receive the others by prayer and the unction of the Holy Spirit. I shall not repeat all the Apostle's directions to you. I leave them for your own perusal in the holy scriptures. But in the name of the council I charge you, in the words of the apostle, to *take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.* Take heed to the doctrines you hold and preach, and see that they are according to godliness, according to the Scriptures. Whatever opinions may be proposed to you as doctrines of christianity, "search the Scriptures, after the laudable example of the Bereans, to see if these things are so." Carefully and diligently study the sacred volume, and compare one part with another, that you may arrive at the truth. Let no preconceived or favourite opinion have weight with you, otherwise than as you find it, upon impartial examination, founded on scripture. Guard yourself

against the influence of prejudice, which is a blind guide, and frequently the cause of error, leading those who are governed by it to *teach for doctrines the commandments of men*, which have no foundation in Scripture. Take heed to yourself in your conversation. Let it be *as becomes the gospel of Christ*, and the great, serious, and important truths you preach; that others may be won by your conversation, as well as by your preaching, to the faith and practice of religion. But, for this end, it should not be in that strain of deep sadness and melancholy, which the feelings of guilt, and the apprehension of condemnation, may excite, when our sinful state is viewed, unconnected with the promises of the gospel. Such a conversation is rather discouraging, than inviting, to a religious life; but let yours be tempered and mingled with that cheerfulness which hope inspires, under the prospect of our final deliverance from the evils of sin. Upon other subjects, let it be such a cheerful conversation as is consistent with religious sobriety, such as will be useful to yourself, as well as to others, by exhilirating the spirits, which will give vigour to your mind, after the fatigue of study, and will enable you to return, recruited with new strength, to sober thinking again. Our religion is not an austere and gloomy system. The gospel which you will preach brings glad tidings of great joy to all people, and they whose faith and hope of salvation are in this gospel, who expect to enjoy the glorious privileges and blessings of it, should maintain a cheerful, as well as a serious, disposition, to recommend it to others. The cheerful christian shews the strength of his faith in the benevolence and mercy of God.

Take heed also to your conduct. While the man of the world takes no heed to himself respecting his spiritual interest, but walks carelessly, and thoughtlessly on in the *broad* way, unconcerned for any con-

sequences but those which will effect his temporal state, the true christian walks in a *narrow* path, and looks to more remote consequences. He acts, not so much with reference to this world, as to that which is to come; on which his strongest hopes and best affections are placed. He makes some sacrifices here, to enjoy greater benefits hereafter;—and a christian minister, being, by his office, separated from the mass of the people, and placed on higher ground, as an example to others, becomes a conspicuous character: and he should walk circumspectly before his flock, as a pattern of good works for their imitation, in the denial of some things, and doing of others. While you, sir, teach them the duties of piety and morality, you will exemplify these duties in your practice, and prove the sincerity of your preaching by the correctness of your conduct; letting them see that you can bear privations in the cause of Christ, and resist those temptations to evil, which a fascinating world places before your eyes; and can practise those virtues which are beneficial to your fellow men. Both in your conversation and behaviour, we trust, you will exhibit that spirit of piety, benevolence, and meekness, which is the greatest ornament of our nature, essential to the christian character, and indispensable in that of a christian minister.

Take heed, also, to the flock over which you are now made an overseer, to feed and protect them. Feed them with the bread of life which came down from heaven. Let your preaching be practical, more than speculative; your discourses pious and moral, such as will mend the heart, rather than fill the head with matter for doubtful disputation. Be more solicitous to write well, than to write much; that you may bring beaten oil into the sanctuary, to give light to your hearers. Preach the truth as it is in Jesus. Preach to the understanding of your hearers, more than to their pas-

sions; that their minds may be filled with the knowledge of divine things: and address the passions only through the understanding, that you may excite a holy zeal and pious affection in your hearers, while you carefully guard them against false emotions, and prevent their running wild in the field of fanaticism. Give milk to babes and meat to those who can bear it. In your ministerial visits, give instruction to the ignorant; assist them with your advice and your counsel in their difficulties, when they ask it; comfort the afflicted with the hopes and promises of the gospel, and pour the balm of consolation into their wounded spirits. Imitate your divine Master, *who went about doing good.*

You will recollect that you succeed in this place, a sensible, pious, and affectionate minister, who endeared himself to his people by his judicious preaching and conduct. They expect the same from you, and we wish you the same success in your labours among them, and in establishing yourself in their affections. Remember that you are set as a watchman to guard the flock against the wolves which may attempt to break into the fold and destroy the sheep. Administer the ordinances of the gospel; and assist in ordination of such persons as you think qualified for the work of the ministry. Live in charity with all men, who live by the rules of the gospel, however they may differ from you on speculative points of doctrine; remembering that love is the fulfilling of the law, and the characteristic of the religion you teach.

Oppose gainsayers with argument, and not with bitter words, which engender strife and sour the temper. Let your lips preserve knowledge, and your speech drop as the dew upon the tender herb, and as the honey from the honeycomb, which will molify the spirit of opposition, and sweeten the intercourse between you and your brethren, who differ

from you in opinion. As a soldier of Christ you are called to a warfare *against principalities, and the power of darkness, and spiritual wickedness. Put on, therefore, the armour of God, that you may be able to stand*, and trust to the strength of Christ, which will be sufficient for you. He will never forsake you, while you *contend earnestly for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free;* and be not entangled by the errors of those who believe too much, or those who believe too little, in matters of religion. Let your fidelity be manifested in the independence of your preaching and conduct, as an ambassador of Christ. Whatever opposition and afflictions you may meet with in the discharge of your duties, remember the examples you have in your divine Master and his apostles. With what patience, fortitude and perseverance, they endured the afflictions and trials they met with, in preaching and promulgating the gospel, and the success which crowned their labours! May these encourage you in the work you have undertaken; and in every trying situation resolve, and say, with the afflicted saint of old, *I will hold fast my integrity* in the cause in which I am engaged; *I will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live. Be thou faithful unto death, and God will give thee the crown of life.*